

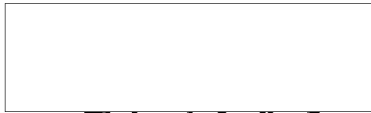


Central Intelligence Agency  
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

3 September 1986

NOTE TO: Director of Central Intelligence

Attached is the memo that Fritz Ermarth mentioned this morning during the NIO meeting. It concludes that the Soviets are likely to have a force reduction, and that a reduction is driven by demographic problems.



Richard J. Kerr  
Deputy Director for Intelligence

Attachment:

SOVA M 86-20078X, dtd 29 Aug 1986

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D. C. 20505

## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 August 1986

USSR: Possible Military Manpower CutsSummary

[redacted] the Soviets may soon announce reductions in military manpower. [redacted] at least some cases, probably have been prompted by Gorbachev's proposal for mutual reductions "from the Atlantic to the Urals" and the allusion in his Vladivostok speech to a possible reduction of Soviet forces in Mongolia. [redacted]

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Although the Soviets would doubtless seek to portray any unilateral cutback as a "peace initiative," we judge the real cause would be the adverse demographic trends in the USSR. Since 1978 there has been a sharp decline in the number of 18-year-old males, and recovery to the mid-1970s level is not expected to occur until the end of the 1990s. The military has had to make several adjustments to its conscription and general personnel policies in recent years in an effort to maintain the active-duty strength of the armed forces. This has added to the pressure on an already stretched labor pool. The Soviet political leadership, whose immediate priority is the domestic economy, has probably become dissatisfied with the military's efforts to claim what in effect is an increasing proportion of a shrinking pool. Under such circumstances, even if cutbacks are not specifically ordered, the military would have to find ways to accommodate a reduction in manpower. [redacted]

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The demographic situation does not require cutbacks so drastic as to reduce substantially the general readiness level of the USSR's armed forces. While we cannot rule out such cuts, the military clearly would resist strongly, and we doubt that the political leadership would force anything radical. Reductions of up to a few hundred thousand might be accommodated, however, and while they would not relieve the overall labor force problems, they could have an important effect at the margin.

This assessment was prepared by [redacted] Defense Economics Division, and [redacted] European Assessments Division, of the Office of Soviet Analysis. Comments and questions are welcome and should be directed to Chief, Defense Economics Division [redacted] or Chief, European Assessments Division [redacted]

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